



What we do – Complaints and Disputes

POLICY

YFS is committed to handling and resolving complaints and disputes in a confidential, fair and timely way. Complaints and disputes provide opportunities for improvement and to review how we see and do things.

SCOPE

This applies to internal and external complaints, disputes from clients, tenants, community agencies, business partners, local business, residents and government agencies. Any negative feedback received is recorded and if possible, treated as a complaint.

PROCEDURE

YFS is committed to using complaints and disputes, to inform continuous improvement in service design and delivery.

1. Complaints are welcome at any time, from any source.
2. Any staff member can handle a client complaint or client feedback.
3. We treat all complaints as reasonable.
4. We facilitate access to interpreters or advocates as required.
5. We accept that clients and stakeholders have the right to make complaints or provide feedback about staff behaviour or the standard of service provided.
6. We respond to complaints promptly.
7. We treat all complaints confidentially.
8. We conduct staff training in complaint handling.
9. There are no repercussions for people who complain.
10. We monitor client and stakeholder satisfaction via planned feedback surveys.

Promotion

- Client information posters displayed in all client rooms and open areas
- YFS website www.yfs.org.au
- Client information pocket guide
- Property and Tenancy Tenant Information.

We accept complaints and notice of disputes

- in person
- by phone (YFS feedback line - 3826 1596 or our office – 3826 1500)
- YFS website (www.yfs.org.au)
- Email (yfs@yfs.org.au)
- in writing to the CEO - YFS Ltd.
PO Box 727
Woodridge QLD 4114

Exclusions

YFS does not respond to complaints that are discriminatory. For example, racist, sexist, ageist, etc.

We deal carefully with all complaints and disputes taking care not to cause harm to either party.

Staff grievances are handled by Human Resources procedures.

YFS will arrange translator or interpreter services for hearing impaired clients or clients who wish to make their complaint or dispute in a language other than English.

Clients with a disability will be encouraged to have a friend or advocate to help make a complaint.

Complainants have the right to:

- be treated with respect, sensitivity and confidentiality
- have their complaint or dispute handled without prejudice or assumptions. The emphasis shall be resolving the problem or addressing the dispute.
- take their complaint or dispute to an external authority at any point during the process.
- be distressed at the time of making a complaint; we do not reject the substance of a complaint because of the manner in which it is delivered.

Complainants will not be discriminated against or suffer any adverse actions as a result of making a complaint about standards of service or disputing an organisational decision.

Complainants are informed of an expected response time unless it is resolved immediately.

The nature of the complaint or dispute will determine how it is addressed.

A simple complaint is about some matter that is immediately correctable and will usually be the result of error rather than a systematic problem. These complaints should be addressed immediately by the staff involved. This is followed up with updating the line manager for discussion at the next Service Development meeting.

Processing a complaint that may require consultation, investigation and a review of systems or decisions will cover the following processes:

- The person dealing with the matter has no personal interest in the matter.
- The line manager reviewing the decision is not the original decision maker.
- The matter is resolved immediately OR the line manager will contact the complainant within 24 working hours to tell them of receipt of the complaint or dispute and the immediate action being taken to address it.
- The Program Manager will collect necessary information, assess the complaint or dispute and submit it to the relevant member of the Executive Leadership and Management Team with recommendations for resolution.
- While the complaint is being looked into, the complainant will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint.

A complaint about a staff member is about the behaviour of a staff person in the course of their duties as a representative of YFS.

- A complaint about a staff member can be made to a line manager of that person or the CEO. The manager will collect necessary information, undertake analysis of the complaint and submit it to their manager with recommendations for resolution.
- Depending on the circumstances, the client will be asked if they would like contact to cease (depending on the complaint) with the worker/s involved while the matter is dealt with. If this is their preference, the manager will arrange for services to continue.
- The staff member that is the subject of the complaint will be informed as soon as practicable.
- If the complaint is related to performance it will be taken into account during the staff member's supervision meetings and performance management processes.

A complaint about the CEO is about his/her behaviour in the course of their duties as a representative of YFS.

- A complaint about the CEO will immediately be referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management who will decide on an appropriate course of action. The Chairperson's email and phone number will be provided.
- Such complaints may be discussed and recorded by the Board.
- These complaints will be recorded and processed by the Chairperson and stored to maintain privacy.

A complaint against a client by another client may be made to any YFS staff member.

- This complaint then needs to be referred to their manager.
- The manager will collect necessary information, summarise and discuss with management.

Resolution processes may include:

- mediation
- internal review of a YFS group
- reporting to an external agency.

A complaint about a YFS client involving YFS programs/staff will be addressed by the relevant manager by arranging an urgent meeting.

Complaints about YFS tenants

- The nature of the complaint will determine how the matter is to be resolved.
- Complaints, including complaints about a tenant's behaviour, which are not police matters will be dealt with in accord with our complaints principles. After 13 weeks in a Crisis Accommodation Property (CAP), they will be dealt with under the RTRAA (2008).
- Disputes will be addressed by engaging the complainant and tenant in a dispute resolutions process such as mediation through an independent body. YFS may refer those involved to South Queensland Dispute Resolution Centre in Brisbane.

If a client or tenant disputes a decision made about them; the following will apply:

- The person dealing with the dispute has no personal interest in the matter
- The manager reviewing the decision is not the original decision maker
- The client or tenant who is disputing the decision will be provided with written progress of and reasons regarding the decision within 14 working days of the dispute being reported to YFS.

Communication

The client or tenant will be kept informed of developments. Resolution will depend on the gravity of the complaint or dispute.

Response to the complaint may be either verbal or in written form, and will depend on the seriousness of the complaint or dispute, the ease with which it is rectified and the desires of the complainant. Any written response will either be hand delivered, emailed with a receipt request or mailed via Express Post.

External bodies

In relation to all complaints and disputes the person receiving the matter will advise the complainant of their right to access external complaints authorities or the YFS funding department at any point during the complaints process – refer to YFS Client Information Pocket Guide (101304).

Disputes with tenants on matters covered by the RTRAA are taken to the QCAT.

People making serious complaints will be immediately advised of their right to register their complaint with external complaint bodies and/or advocacy services.

If YFS receives 3rd hand information in the form of a complaint about a crime, we will recommend this be reported to police.

Other serious allegations or concerns such as professional misconduct may involve other relevant external bodies. The matter will be immediately referred to the CEO. In these instances the CEO will appoint an internal and/or external person to deal with the matter.

Control of Records

The person handling the complaint will ensure that the complaint or dispute is recorded in the YFS Quality Register, regardless of the form in which they were received. Action taken is to be completed within 15 working days except on occasions where there is complexity and systemic changes required.

Relevant documents (complaint and response) are scanned and saved on to the applicable record system and in the YFS Quality Register.

Training

Staff, management and Board, has a commitment to efficient and fair resolution of complaints. Staff will be instructed in why we welcome complaints, handling principles and procedures.

Reporting

Complaints are reviewed and discussed at the quarterly Business Review Meeting. Where there is a serious nature to the complaint, it is taken to the YFS Board.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint - Any expression of dissatisfaction or concern made to YFS by YFS, or on behalf of, an individual, group or related to YFS' services. A complaint can be about the organisation, a staff member, volunteer, student or board member.

Dispute - A dispute is a disagreement or difference between clients, tenants and external stakeholders about a YFS decision or inaction.